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TAGS: MOPS PREL NATO EUN TU

SUBJECT: TURKS SEEKING ENHANCED ROLE IN ESDP PLANNING

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Turkish MFA U/S (D equivalent) Apakan told Ambassador April 11 that Turkey would like an enhanced role in ESDP planning. The Turks are approaching other NATO and EU members individually; PM Erdogan spoke with Javier Solana in Riyadh. As an EU accession candidate which participates in a number of EU-led missions, Turkey would like to be more than an implementer. Apakan indicated that the inclusion of Turkey would give the GOT "greater flexibility" in other areas - in particular, heretofore sticky NATO-EU matters involving Cyprus. End summary.

¶2. (C) The Turks are approaching a wide swath of EU and NATO members individually, including German presidency, the UK and us, to ask that Turkey, as a country negotiating on EU accession, be included more broadly in ESDP mission planning.

PM Erdogan raised the issue directly with the EU's Javier Solana on the margins of the recent Arab League Summit in Riyadh; Solana reportedly agreed to reflect on the Turkish request. The GOT maintains that:

--Turkey views NATO as the preeminent Transatlantic forum that must retain a vital role on strategic issues, but also considers NATO-EU relations to be institutionally important;

--Turkey assumes great responsibilities in EU peacekeeping operations as close to home as Kosovo and Bosnia, and as far flung as the Congo; the EU reaps the benefits, with Turkey enhancing EU defense and security;

--As an EU accession candidate, Turkey should have a voice in planning missions where it will contribute to implementation;

--The Nice Implementation Document foresees consultations with non-EU NATO allies when an envisaged EU operation will be conducted in the geographic proximity of a non-EU NATO ally or affect its national security interests; the EU has not done so with Turkey; and

--Turkey is still waiting for approvals of an Administrative Arrangements document between Turkey and the European Defense Agency (EDA) which Cyprus has vetoed, as well as a Turkey-EU security agreement that provides for sharing of classified information. Cyprus has blocked both of them.

¶3. (C) The result, according to Apakan and Deputy Director General for NATO Serdar Kilic, is that Turkey has little room for maneuver on issues related to NATO-EU cooperation. Apakan stated that genuine frustration in a variety of ministries which see Turkey treated as a "third party" has reached a tipping point: "We want to do more but some want Turkey to back off" with respect to aspects of ESDP and related arrangements. A qualitative shift, allowing for GOT participation in the mission planning processes of the EU,

would both change the nature of Turkey's participation in ESDP and allow for more GOT flexibility in areas of NATO-EU cooperation, as well as in relations between Turkey and the EU overall. This would include greater Turkish flexibility to allow for the participation of Cyprus and Malta.

¶4. (C) Ambassador asked why the Turks had decided to raise this issue now. Apakan responded that it appeared if they did not address the problem with the Europeans, it would only grow. To date, the Turks see this as a one-way street. Ambassador said that he would convey Turkey's concerns to Washington.

¶5. (C) Comment: It appears the Turks continue to get hammered in NATO-EU fora and are looking for a face-saving way out. They have latched onto their status as an EU accession candidate as a hook to obtain a greater voice in ESDP planning, in exchange for demonstrating greater flexibility on Cypriot participation in NATO-EU discussions. End comment.

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